



The mission of Columbus Public Health is to protect health and improve lives in our community, including the LGBTQ community. The LGBTQ Health Initiative was created to address gaps in care and issues of health inequity within gender and sexually diverse communities.

#### **Elements of Initiative:**

- **Cultural Competency Training Program**

Many LGBTQ individuals don't feel safe disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity to healthcare professionals. In order to create more safe spaces in healthcare settings for gender and sexually diverse clients, the LGBTQ Health Initiative has developed a cultural competency training for healthcare professionals. The training is free and can be offered with Continuing Education Credits for Nurses and Social Workers.

- **Greater Columbus LGBTQ Health Coalition**

The Greater Columbus LGBTQ Health Coalition is a community-based initiative made up of health care providers, caregivers, community leaders, organizations and allies, all with the goal of fostering positive health and safety outcomes within the city's gender and sexually diverse communities. This includes, but is not limited to, becoming a visible voice of advocacy for gender and sexually diverse clients; educating and providing inclusive wellness resources; and filling data gaps in research.

- **Health Promotion and Prevention**

The LGBTQ Health Initiative collaborates with local community partners to promote healthy lifestyle choices. These collaborations result in programming geared toward the LGBTQ communities in Greater Columbus. Recent collaborations include: Stonewall Pride Parade & Festival, Stonewall Wellness Expo, Alzheimer's Association's "Fight Alzheimer's with Pride" project, The ADAMH Board of Franklin County cultural competency community conversation Ohio Attorney General's Office Homeless Youth Initiative and the Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO) LGBTQ Youth Safety Summit.

#### **Why an LGBTQ Health Initiative?**

LGBTQ people face a vast range of significant health disparities. While some of these health disparities are a result of behavior, most of them are associated with social and institutional inequities resulting from homophobia and discrimination levied against LGBTQ people. The health disparities experienced by LGBTQ people can be grouped into four basic categories, namely,

1. Infectious Disease
2. Chronic Disease
3. Behavioral Health
4. Quality of Life Issues

Among the health disparities<sup>1</sup> experienced by the LGBT community, LGBT people experience a disproportionate amount of suicide, homelessness, mental health challenges, breast and cervical cancer, HIV and other STIs, obesity, tobacco, alcohol and other drug use. The transgendered community is at even greater risk for many of these concerns than their lesbian, gay and bisexual counterparts.

*Because of this and many other factors:*

- Lesbians are less likely to seek preventative care for cancer.
- More than 60% of the transgender population doesn't have access to adequate health insurance prior to the Affordable Care Act.
- LGBTQ youth are 40-60% of the homeless youth population.
- Gay men still account for 60% of new HIV Infections; African American gay men have the highest infection rate nationwide.

References:

1. "Report on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health," Healthy People.gov  
<http://healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=25>